



CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

UNITED CHURCH AT WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Following an address at a recent synod meeting, the editor was challenged with the question: What *action* has our denomination taken, as distinguished from *pronouncements*, in the interest of social justice. We offer here a few illustrations of how our pastors and churches are acting to combat intolerance and to achieve better community patterns.

HENDERSON, KENTUCKY

When the White Citizens Council invaded this Ohio River city to halt the integration of the public schools by threats and hostile demonstrations, the Ministers' Association was the one organized community group that supported the school board's decision, sustained officials in keeping order, and worked to persuade parents to send their children to school.

As already reported in our church papers, a key figure in the ministerial group was the Reverend Theodore A. Braun, pastor of Zion United Church of Christ, subsequently elected to membership on the Council for Christian Social Action and also to the presidency of the Henderson Ministerial Association. On October 2, Mr. Braun was one of a number of representative southern leaders interviewed on the Dave Garroway television program and bore impressive testimony to the Christian stake in the struggle.

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LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

When this new community was built, homes were sold to white buyers with the understanding that the developers would not sell to non-whites. Great opposition developed when a Negro

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 3)

CITIZENS SHARE IN THE DECISIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Suggestions on how Christians can be more effective citizens

By FERN BABCOCK

In a democracy, all citizens share responsibility for the actions of the government. When good people do not take their part in making decisions on public issues, the way is open for selfish men to make them to their own benefit.

As Christians we are called to love God with all our heart and soul and strength; and our neighbors as ourselves. To love our neighbors, we must be concerned about the laws and institutions which affect their lives, as well as treat them as ourselves in face-to-face relationships. Many of the decisions which affect us most directly are made by city councils and mayors, by state legislatures and governors, by Congress and the President. These representatives of the people look to us for guidance and support as they decide issues of great consequence for every American, and frequently for every human being on the earth.

How can ordinary citizens take their part in directing the course of government? What resources do we have as Christians for carrying our share of this responsibility? Among the ways open to us are to:

Enter into the lives of our neighbors. How do they live? What are their joys, satisfactions and problems? Do they have the opportunity to fulfill God's intention for their lives? We remember that our neighbor is the woman next door, the alcoholic on Skid Row, the prosperous industrialist, the hungry child in India.

Get the facts. No one can be well informed on all the issues upon which our government takes action. However, we can acquire a working knowledge of major issues by reading one or two good newspapers; by listening to qualified radio and television newscasters; by

reading one or more critical magazines such as *SOCIAL ACTION*, *CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY*, *The Christian Century*, *The Reporter*, *The New Republic*, *Harper's*, or *The Atlantic*; by reading legislative reports issued by state and national groups, e.g., those issued by state councils of churches, and *Memo*, published monthly by the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches (122 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington 2, D. C., \$1.00 per year).

Discuss the facts with others. The knowledge and point of view of others can help us gain better understanding of the issue. Individuals might read different sources and share their information in a small group meeting at the church. Friends might come together in each other's homes to listen to and discuss informative television broadcasts such as *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *See It Now*.

Make a decision upon the issue, as Christians. With the information that is available, what seems right to us? The perspective of Christian faith means that we try to judge the situation as God intends it to be. The earth is the Lord's and is to be governed in accordance with his will. Even though we

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

Citizens Share in the Decisions of Government

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

decide an issue one way today, new information may lead us to a different conclusion later. Acting today on the knowledge we have is more important than waiting until all the evidence is in, and the decision has been made by less objective persons.

Decide whether "there ought to be a law." When citizens in a democracy confront an injustice, they rightly think that it should be prohibited by law. Sometimes a new law is needed, but often an existing law only needs to be enforced.

Call for law observance. Interviews with the mayor, the governor, the heads of state or federal agencies or law enforcement officers may be all that is necessary to correct a situation. Sometimes a good law is passed but it has no effect because funds are not appropriated to carry out its purpose; then it is necessary to work for an appropriations bill.

Work for the passage of constructive legislation. When we elect city councilmen, state legislators and Congressmen to represent us, we are responsible for letting them know what we think. This can be done through personal conversation, when possible, or through letters and telegrams. Most elected officials pay a great deal of attention to letters, particularly if they are thoughtfully written and help the representatives see how the issue appears to their constituents. Correspondence with a Congressman on a particular issue might have these stages: (1) write to ask him what he thinks about it; (2) ask him to send a copy of the bill now being discussed in Congress; (3) thank him for his views and for a copy of the bill and tell him our views; and (4) commend him for his vote on the issue, or express disappointment that he did not vote as we had hoped. It goes without saying that courteous letters are more effective than the ones that threaten the representative with retaliation at the next election! Some newspapers report regularly on how Congressmen from the area voted on major bills. If our newspaper does not, we can ask it to do so.

Invite government officials to discuss issues at church meetings. The opportunity for face-to-face discussion with our representatives can be mutually beneficial. Such meetings can help church members get acquainted with their representatives and learn more about the issues. They can help our

representatives know what we think and give them evidence of our concern.

Hold meetings to discuss issues; and inform government representatives of the opinions expressed. Our representatives will be interested in brief accounts of these meetings and a summary of the majority and minority points of view. A pro and con statement of opinion is more effective than a resolution. A newspaper clipping describing the meeting might also be enclosed.

Write letters to the editor. Many people read this section of a newspaper more carefully than others. It is helpful to send clippings of these letters to our representatives.

Write articles for periodicals. Such articles not only influence the regular subscribers but affect government policy. Many government bureaus, such as the Department of State, keep in touch with the thinking of the people by surveying the opinions expressed in magazines, including religious periodicals.

Bring the issues into the presence of God in worship. Ask the minister to pray about the issue or to refer to it in the sermon. New insight on our problems will come as we consider them in worship.

Distribute fact sheets and other information to church members. Materials prepared locally or leaflets prepared by national organizations can be helpful in giving information to a large number of persons.

Learn the value of pressure groups in the public interest. Government officials are under pressure from a great variety of sources. If pressure comes only from those whose interest is private profit, they get no support for policies in the public interest. Showing the film *Pressure Groups* will help church members understand this function. In the film, a state senator explains to a skeptical young man the operation both of selfish and of disinterested pressure groups. The film is 16 mm., black and white, with sound. It may be rented from Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Inc., 202 E. 44th Street, New York, N. Y. for \$4.50.

Fern Babcock, publications secretary of the Council for Christian Social Action and Editor of SOCIAL ACTION, is the CC answer to the E&R's who have felt that the denominational social action staff would be stronger if it included a woman. Miss Babcock's ability and her experience with the YWCA student program makes her a valuable member of the united "team."

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(Continued from Page 1, Col. 1)

family purchased a home in the summer of 1957.

While harrassment of the family continues, community leaders are trying to enable them to live in their new home in peace and security. The Reverend Ray L. Harwick, minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of nearby Fairless Hills, is chairman of the citizens group seeking a just solution to the situation.

The Plymouth Congregational Church of Levittown, of which Fred R. Manthey, Jr., is minister, discussed the resolution on racial integration adopted by the 1956 General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches (page 22). The officers of the church took a paid advertisement in the local newspaper to publish the resolution and their endorsement of it, with this statement:

At this time, we the duly elected officers of Plymouth Congregational Church wish publicly to affirm that Plymouth Congregational Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania, and the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches will give their full support to all officers and members, in whatever part of Levittown they may reside, who live by and practice these duly affirmed principles.

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DOVER, DELAWARE

Aware that communication between white and Negro people is a serious need in border and southern states, the social action committee of People's Congregational Church in 1953 invited a Negro leader to a series of meetings in the homes of its members. As a result of the exchange of information which took place, the committee's findings were reported to the Women's Fellowship and to the congregation as a whole.

The next step was the active participation of the committee's members in a community-wide Commission on Human Relations organized during the late winter. This committee sought to

SOCIAL ACTION CALENDAR

November 19 — International Relations Committee, CCSA, New York.

January 2-3—CCSA Executive Committee, New York.

January 6-16—Puerto Rican Study Tour, Galen Weaver, Director.

January 19-26—Church and Economic Life Week.

January 29-31—Council for Christian Social Action Meeting, Buck Hill Falls Inn, Cresco, Pennsylvania.

February—Christian Social Action Month of Emphasis, United Church of Christ.

February 4-7 — Churchmen's Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C.

February 9—Race Relations Sunday.

February 11-13—Southern Christian Social Action Institute, Avon Park, Florida.

April 15-17—CCSA Washington Seminar.

create a climate of opinion favorable to increased communication among all segments of the community, to educate the public as to issues, and to suggest ways of increasing good will. Pastor Robert W. Duke was chosen president of the Commission and later received the Jaycee award as the outstanding citizen of the city for his work in human relations.

At the same time, the churches acting together began to sponsor interracial inter denominational teacher training courses. All union services were interracial. Councils of church women and youth integrated their programs.

Following the Supreme Court decision of May, 1954, the School Board, whose chairman was a member of People's Church, adopted a plan for limited desegregation in the Dover High School. Dover High School thus became the only school in all of Delaware south of Wilmington offering any measure of racial integration. When, through the efforts of church leadership and the local chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, interested citizens wrote letters to the local newspaper supporting the school proposal, other citizens and civic groups took a similar stand. As a result, neither Bryant Bowles nor John Kasper got a foothold in the city.

For the past four years the rabbi of Beth Shalom Temple has been the guest speaker at People's Church on Brotherhood Sunday. The pastor, in turn, has participated with others in Brotherhood Services at the Temple. In Mr. Duke's judgment these services have done much to further the cause of better understanding between the various groups in the community.

WHAT DOES THE IMMIGRATION LAW DO?

According to a news release from Roland Elliott, Director of Immigration Services for the Department of Church World Service of the National Council of Churches, the new immigration bill includes the following provisions:

Section 1 broadens the definition of "stepchild" to include an illegitimate child.

Section 2 provides that an illegitimate child shall receive the same benefits as a legitimate child occurring from relationship to its mother.

Section 3 provides that benefits now extended to spouses and children of first preference aliens who accompany such alien shall now be extended to spouses and children who follow to join him later.

Section 4 admits an unlimited number of orphans quota free for the next two years.

Section 5 grants discretionary authority to the Attorney General to waive certain grounds of exclusion in behalf of spouse, parent or child, including a minor adopted child, of a United States citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

Section 6 permits a waiver by the Attorney General, after consultation with the Surgeon General, to admit in T.B. cases spouses, parents and minor children, including adopted children, of United States citizens or aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

Section 7 permits certain aliens who made misrepresentations with reference to their nationality or place of birth to avoid repatriation to Communist controlled countries, to remain in the United States.

Section 8 permits the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to waive fingerprinting requirements for alien visitors.

Section 9 permits the Attorney General to give permanent residence status to highly skilled aliens already in this country as of July 1, 1957, who have acquired first preference ratings, but who come from countries in which first preference quotas are oversubscribed.

Section 10 removes the existing mortgages on quotas.

Section 11 provides expeditious naturalization of adopted children of United

States citizens employed abroad, without requiring such children to reside in the United States.

Section 12 grants non-quota status to certain skilled specialists, parents of United States citizens and spouses and children of lawfully resident aliens (first, second and third preference cases) on whose behalf a petition for preference status was approved by the Attorney General prior to July 1, 1957.

Section 13 allows a maximum of fifty diplomatic people now in this country to remain here permanently if they do not desire to return to their home-lands.

Section 14 merely states that the definitions of the Immigration and Nationality Act apply to this legislation.

Section 15 provides for the use of the 18,656 unused non-quota immigrant visas remaining from the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, as amended. It allots 2,500 to German expellees described in Section 4(a) (1) of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, as amended; 1,600 to Dutch ethnics, Section 4(a) (9) and (10). The remainder are to be issued to refugee escapees forced to flee from Communist, Communist-dominated or Communist occupied areas, or from any country in the Middle East (area between and including Libya on the west, Turkey on the north, Pakistan on the east and Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia on the south) who are unable to return to the place from which they fled because of persecution or fear of persecution on account of race, religion or political opinions. These numbers shall also be available to the spouses and unmarried sons or daughters under 21, including stepchildren and adopted children of such persons, if accompanying them.

Section 16 provides that the 5 years continued physical presence in the United States required of a child born abroad of one citizen and one alien parent shall not be broken by absence totalling one year.

This legislation clearly will help many refugees; however, it does fall far short of what is needed especially to regularize the position of Hungarian parolees whose uncertain status continues to be a deterrent to their resettlement or to provide for similar emergencies in the future.

NOTES ON THE STAFF

The members and staff of the Council for Christian Social Action are seeing action literally at all four points of the compass. Director Ray Gibbons recently spent three weeks in Hawaii, visiting Congregational Christian churches and associations on the four major islands. During September and October Cleveland members of the staff attended some twenty fall synod meetings, while their New York colleagues participated in various regional meetings and state conference programs.

Huber Klemme, Associate Director of the Council, had the opportunity to address the Convention of District 9, United Steelworkers of America, whose director is C. B. Newell, a member of the Council's executive committee. Senator Wayne Morse, who also addressed this labor group, holds membership in a Congregational Church. So the United Church was prominently represented!

Staff teams are scheduled to participate in regional workshops and local meetings, planned cooperatively, except in the case of Puerto Rico, by the synods and state conferences in each area:

November 3-25—Missouri and Kansas:
Schlegel, Weaver; Reissig, Marcus.

December 1-16—Northeast Ohio:
Schlegel, Reissig; Klemme, Weaver.

December 1-15—Northwest Ohio:
Gibbons, Marcus, Babcock.

January 6-16—Puerto Rico:
Weaver, Schlegel.

January 11-24—Southwest Ohio:
Reissig, Marcus, Schlegel;
Klemme, Gibbons, Weaver.

February 2-16—Southeast Ohio:
Gibbons, Marcus, Babcock.

Churches Study Social Problems

Early in October Immanuel Congregational Church of Hartford, Conn. planned to begin an interesting series of studies in an adult discussion group sponsored jointly by the congregation's committees on Christian Education and Social Action. Three units of study were proposed. In the first unit four sessions of the class will deal with "The Background of Christian Social Action"; the second unit in four more sessions is on the general theme "Greater Hartford Confronts Its Churches." Leaders in the religious and civic life of Hartford are scheduled to address these eight sessions, which will be led by Professor Elwood Street, chairman of the Social Action Committee.

In the third unit the class will give close attention to a number of specific social problems with which Christian groups everywhere need to be concerned. Among the topics listed are: Children and the Family, Marriage Counselling, Youth Problems and Services, Health, Housing, Minority Groups and the Aging. The report from Hartford indicated that about 30 people had already signed up for the course early in September.

* * * *

Another story comes from the Community Church of Onondaga, Michigan. Here an adult church school group and

FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) is this year aiding more than 45 million children and their mothers in over 95 countries around the world, with food, DDT, penicillin and vaccine. UNICEF supplies the ammunition to combat malnutrition and diseases which are the scourges of childhood.

You can help UNICEF by using its very attractive Christmas cards for your greetings this year. Designed by Ludwig Bemelmans, the cards are in full color with "Season's Greetings" in red and green in five official languages of the United Nations. The series comes only in an assortment of two each of five designs, packed ten cards to a box—per box \$1.25. If you wish further information before ordering, write to: UNICEF Greeting Card Fund, United Nations, New York, and ask for their folder containing colored illustrations of the cards.

its leader, Ernest A. Kelford, became dissatisfied with the conventional adult class approach, in which the teacher did all the work and got most of the education. The program was reorganized so as to make all members of the group responsible for study and research. On Thursday every member and prospective member of the group receives a summary of his own remarks on the preceding Sunday and an outline of areas to be studied for the next Sunday's discussion.

Among the subjects thus far considered are Unemployment, the Schools and the Formation of Character, Interfaith Marriages, the Causes and Cure of War, and the Reuther proposal to halt inflation.

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Ray Gibbons, Director

Huber F. Klemme, Associate Director and Editor

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